

Parable of the Vineyard

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
Matthew 21:33-46

Church Season
Pentecost

Lesson Focus
God keeps coming back for us.

Bible Memory Verse
**Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son."
Matthew 21:37**



Tear here for easy use!

Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Activity Kids choose one thing to go back for from their home.	Activity Pages 	Pencils, sticky notes
Opening Conversation Kids review previous week, build relationships, and learn the new Bible Memory Verse (BMV).	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	None
Opening Prayer Kids tiptoe away and run back when they hear the words "come back."	None	None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Parable of the Vineyard Story Kids make a map of the story.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets	Mural paper, markers
Back For More Kids run to get ingredients.	Leaflets	Sticky notes, pencils
Amazing In Our Eyes Kids look up verses to finish a maze.	Spark Bibles, Leaflets	Pencils

Lesson At-A-Glance

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Fun Facts Kids turn the room into a vineyard.	Leaflets	Scratch paper, pencils
Cornerstone Cross Kids fold a cross into a cornerstone.	Leaflets	Scissors, clear tape, pencils
Cornerstone Toss Kids get cornerstones back to their owners.	None	Cornerstones from Cornerstone Cross

Tear here for easy use!

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Closing Conversation Kids review the BMV and look at the Faith on the Go! options.	Leaflets	Cornerstones from Cornerstone Cross, paper, pencils
Closing Prayer Kids tiptoe toward the leader and run away when they hear the words "go out."	Family Pages 	None



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content! Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find four downloadable resources for this lesson: an Activity Page, a Family Page, and two additional in-class activities.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the downloadable Activity Page and set them out for kids to try.

As kids arrive, hand out pencils and sticky notes. Ask the question, **If your family had to leave your home and never go back, what would be the one thing you would want to go back for?** Have kids stick their notes up on the wall where everyone can see and share why they chose the things they chose.

Spark Resources
Activity Pages



Supplies
Pencils
Sticky notes

Opening Conversation

Who was able to try a Faith on the Go! activity this past week? Tell us what you did. Allow some time for sharing.

Who can tell me the Bible Memory Verse from last week? If kids remember the BMV, invite them to recite it for the group. Guide the kids to help them remember parts they don't.

It would be really hard to leave behind things you love if you had to leave your home. Has anyone had an experience like that where you had to move, or something happened to where you live? Have you heard stories about that on the news, maybe because of a natural disaster?

After a time of sharing, ask kids to look up Matthew 21:37 on page 1085 in the Spark Bible. **Just like we would want to go back for something we love, God keeps coming back for us. Today's story is about a landowner who is persistent. He sent his servants to do something and they got killed. So he risked everything and sent his son. The landowner wasn't going to give up!** Divide the group in two. The first group reads the first half of the verse ("Finally he sent his son to them, saying") and the second group reads the second half ("They will respect my son"). After they read it three times have them say it three times without looking at their Bibles. Now switch parts and say it three times. Finally, say it in unison three times. Invite kids to put I Memorized It stickers in their Bibles. **Well done, everyone!**

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
None

Tear here for easy use!

Opening Prayer

For our prayer today you're going to tiptoe away from me until you hear the words "come back." When you hear me say "come back," turn around and run back to me and give me a high five.

Dear Jesus,

No matter what we do you love us. No matter where we go, you always come back for us. Thank you! Amen.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

Parable of the Vineyard Story

Lay out a length of mural paper about 6½ feet (2 m) long. There should be enough room for everyone to gather around it. Spread the markers out all over it. **We're going to map out our story today. I'll read a few verses and then we'll draw what we've read. I want you to look up the story too, so that you can double-check what you're drawing by looking in your own Bible.** Help kids find Matthew 21:33-46 on pages 1085-1086 in the Spark Bible.

Read a few verses and stop to draw. Kids can add things that aren't in the story, as well—like where the landowner lives when he's not at the vineyard. When the parable ends in verse 41, ask the kids to retell the story in their own words by looking at the drawing and saying what happened. After they tell the story, finish reading verses 42-46.

Discuss the I Wonder statements on the first page of the leaflet.

What does this parable teach us about who God is? (*God keeps coming back for us. God is persistent and would even send God's son!*) **Let's read another story about coming back again and see how it plays off in the end!**

Back For More

Set the sticky notes and pencils on one side of room. Gather in a circle on the other side of the room to read Back For More on the front of the leaflet. **I need a volunteer or two to read this story. As we read it I'm going to send a few of you on some errands. If I send you to get something, like milk, run over to the sticky notes, write milk on one, and run it back. By the end of the story we should have all of our ingredients.** Assign readers. Stop them as necessary and send different kids to run and get ingredients. There will be five runners total.

The kid in this story had to do a lot of running! In the end, what happened? Did the kid know that the cupcakes were going to be good, or that they wouldn't get burned? Do you think the kid went to get the ingredients for love of cupcakes or for love of Aunt Ruthie? God keeps coming back for us, not because of what we do, but because God loves us.

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Sticky notes
Pencils

Tear here for easy use!

Amazing In Our Eyes

Open your leaflet to the second page and find Look It Up! The Psalms are in the Old Testament, just about in the center of your Bible. The Psalms are like an old song book. These are songs Jesus would've learned as a kid. Read Psalm 118:22-23 on page 662 in the Spark Bible.

It says that what the Lord does is marvelous in our eyes. Today we're learning that one amazing thing God does is that God keeps coming back for us, just like the landowner kept sending people back to the vineyard. Let's do this maze and see if we can get everyone to the vineyard. Ask a volunteer to read the directions for Amazing In Our Eyes on the second page of the leaflet.

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils

Tear here for easy use!

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

Fun Facts

Read through the Fun Facts on page three. **Has anyone seen a cornerstone before?** Talk about where you might find one or if your church has one. They are generally, but not necessarily, more prominent on older buildings. If your church has one and you have time, you could even go look at it, or tell kids where it is for them to check out before they go home.

Now pretend your room or meeting area is a vineyard. With the kids, estimate how big the space is. Space your imaginary rows of vines about one yard (one meter) apart. Use the Fun Facts to estimate how many grapes you could grow there.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Scratch paper
Pencils

Cornerstone Cross

Ask a volunteer to read the directions for Cornerstone Cross on the third page of the leaflet. **Why do you think it's important that our cornerstones are coming from a cross? How is the cross important to who we are and what we base our faith on?**

Help kids fill out information. Some things may be left blank to be filled out at home. Not many kids know their baptismal birthday off the top of their heads! For a sturdier box they can reinforce the inside with tape as well.

You can add stuff to your cornerstone by opening it up and putting things inside of it. If something important happens in your faith life, write it on a scrap of paper and put it in. You could put pictures in it or even prayers. Use it as a reminder that Jesus is our cornerstone.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Scissors
Clear tape
Pencils

Cornerstone Toss

Invite kids to trade cornerstones and stand in a circle. Someone reads information off of the cornerstone they are holding and others guess whose it is. When the owner is guessed the cornerstone is tossed to that kid and he or she goes next. Repeat until everyone has his or her cornerstone back.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Cornerstones from
Cornerstone Cross

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

In our story today the landowner sent different people to the vineyard. It's kind of like how God uses different people in our lives to keep reminding us that God loves us. Each of those people is one more way that God keeps coming back for us! Take a small scrap of paper and write the names of people God uses to remind you of God's love and tuck it into your cornerstone.

Review the Bible Memory Verse. Try saying the first part and see if they can say the second part. Then have them say the first part and you say the second part. Finally, say it all together.

Read through the Faith on the Go! options. **These are ways God uses us to come back for others! Sometimes the best way to come back is to go out! Let's pray.**

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Cornerstones from
Cornerstone Cross
Paper
Pencils

Closing Prayer

Spread kids out away from you. **We're going to do the opposite of our first prayer. When I start praying, tiptoe towards me. When you hear me say "go out," run away from me!**

**Dear Jesus, you keep coming back for us. Now teach us to go out for others!
Amen!**

Be sure to send a leaflet and a Family Page home with each kid.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Tear here for easy use!